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FM AMEMBASSY PHNOM PENH
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 0571
INFO RUCNASE/ASEAN MEMBER COLLECTIVE IMMEDIATE
RUEHBK/AMEMBASSY BANGKOK IMMEDIATE 2693

C O N F I D E N T I A L PHNOM PENH 000221

SIPDIS

STATE FOR THE WATCH; EAP/MLS, P, D, IO

E.O. 12958: DECL: 04/03/2019

TAGS: [PREL](#) [MOPS](#) [PGOV](#) [TH](#) [CB](#)

SUBJECT: APRIL 3 MORNING CLASH ON THAI-CAMBODIAN BORDER AT
PREAH VIHEAR

REF: STATE

Classified By: AMBASSADOR CAROL A. RODLEY FOR REASONS 1.4 (B,D)

¶1. (C) A clash between Thai and Cambodian infantry erupted at 7:20 a.m. April 3 inside the disputed border area near the Cambodian Preah Vihear UNESCO World Heritage Site according to Council of Ministers Secretary of State Phay Siphon. Fighting erupted in an area called the Field of Eagles, the site of a clash last October 15 that left one Thai and three Cambodian soldiers dead. Phay Siphon told Pol/Ec Chief that Thai soldiers had tried to enter the site on March 30, but were turned away after a period of negotiations. Since then, the Cambodians had been negotiating access to the area, which Phay Siphon described as thick jungle cut by a path used by Cambodian infantry patrols.

¶2. (C) The local Cambodian commander had offered to escort unarmed Thai soldiers in the area. However, early in the morning of April 3 as many as 100 Thai soldiers occupying the high ground around a Cambodian platoon position of about 30-40 soldiers descended on them and an exchange of gunfire took place. Phay Siphon said the fighting continued as of 08:15 hours. He did not have any reports on casualties. Prime Minister Hun Sen would be briefed at the Friday morning Council of Ministers meeting, he said.
RODLEY